

Space research may aid motorists, others in keeping vision fog-free

Motorists, and that includes cyclists, may get an assist soon from the most unlikely source—the astronauts.

The same compound used to prevent fogging on the astronauts' helmet visors should do the same for automobile windshields and even visors used by motorcyclists.

As a matter of fact, the potential for this compound is so broad that SCUBA divers frequently annoyed by lens fogging on their headgear, can apply this compound and explore the underwater domain in a fog-free state.

This newly developed compound was used in spaceflight for the first time by the Apollo 15 astro-

nauts.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has applied for a patent on the composition and will grant non-exclusive, royalty-free licenses for its commercial use. So it will find its way to the general public like many other space developments now on the consumer market.

Research leading to the formula was prompted by the fogging of astronaut Eugene Cernan's visor during the flight of Gemini IX (June 1966) which prevented a part of the tests planned for his "space walk." Through Apollo 14, the astronauts used a substance which fogged up in about 30 minutes when their helmets were

cold—below the dew-point of their breath.

While the new, inexpensive compound was developed for the specialized conditions of space flight, it is expected that its usefulness can be considerably broader—on automobile windshields, for example, and for motorcycle, diving and firemen's helmet visors.

It is also effective on plastic, aluminum and other reflective surfaces—in fact, virtually any surface where it is desired to maintain a fog-free state.

Because in space flight use it had to be non-flammable in a pure oxygen atmosphere, it is safe for use in a wide range of

hazardous environments. (Variants may be used where the hazards are smaller.)

The coating is prepared from a composition of 35 parts commercial liquid detergent, five parts deionized water, and four parts silicone-based oil. The components are combined and agitated until the mixture is completely emulsified.

Two thin coatings are applied to the transparent surface. Once dried, the surface can be buffed with a lint-free cloth at the user's option. Thus applied, it has been used successfully under maximum metabolic loads (breathing, body heat, etc.) for five hours and longer.



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